

Keeping in Touch

News and notes from
the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches

March 1992

Survey Reveals UFMCC Women's Needs

By Rev. Kittredge Cherry

A ground-breaking international survey of about 900 lesbians conducted by the UFMCC Women's Secretariat reveals many startling truths about women in UFMCC. Highlights include:

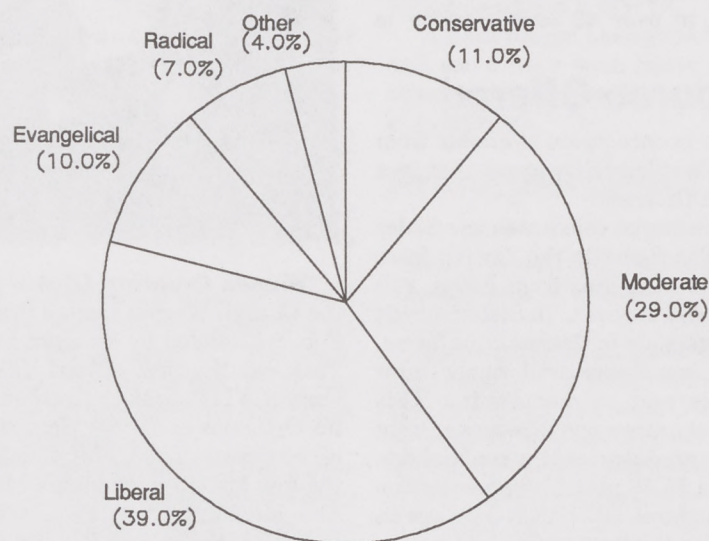
▼ 56 percent have been the victim of incest, rape, molestation, battery or other types of physical or sexual violence.

▼ Liberal theology is the most common orientation in UFMCC, with 40 percent considering themselves liberal. The next largest group is moderate, 29 percent.

▼ Almost half have an annual income of less than \$20,000. Only 22 percent have an income of \$35,000 or more. One quarter receive less than \$12,000.

This is the first time in its 23-year history that UFMCC has officially asked women about their lives, concerns and needs. "These results can be used to better plan programs to meet the needs of women at the local, district and Fellowship levels," said Rev. Coni Staff, chair of the Interim Steering Committee of the Women's Secretariat.

How UFMCC Women See Themselves Theologically



The secretariat recently released a detailed report of 893 survey responses collected from June through August 1991. The survey was distributed at General Conference and through *Keeping in Touch* to UFMCC members and friends throughout the world.

"Several academic researchers have told us that this is the largest needs assessment of lesbians across the country that exists," Rev. Staff said.

The survey points out several areas of need that have important implications for UFMCC. Thirteen percent are

women of color. Thirty-five percent said they have children or are co-parents, a statistic that suggests the need to provide children's programming and childcare at UFMCC events.

Twelve percent described themselves as handicapped or differently abled. "That's equal to the percentage of gay and lesbian people in the world, so we need to take that very seriously and make sure that our churches and conferences are accessible," Rev. Staff said.

Half said they have had problems with substance abuse, including alcohol, drugs, food and other chemicals. "This points up the need to do more work in our churches around substance abuse issues and recovery," she said.

When asked to name the issue most important to them, the survey respondents focused on three major needs: Pay equity for women clergy/staff compared to men's salaries (18 percent), recruiting more women into UFMCC membership (15 percent), and leadership development for UFMCC women (14 percent).

(cont'd on page 2)

UFMCC Raises its Profile in Scotland

Special efforts to raise UFMCC's profile in Scotland are being made in February and March.

▼ A new meeting place has been acquired at Garnethill Multi-Cultural Centre, in the heart of the city of Glasgow. Services will be held on alternative Mondays, with social and discussion meetings on the other Mondays.

▼ Paul Scroton will be spending several weeks in Glasgow during February, developing contacts within the lesbian and gay

community, and providing training for local contacts. Mr. Scroton is coordinator of Outreach Ministries, a special project of UFMCC in the United Kingdom.

▼ In March MCC's first-ever conference in Scotland will be held; the new MCC groups from Newcastle, Manchester and Glasgow will be sharing in a weekend of fellowship, worship and learning.

(cont'd on page 6)

women

Churches Gain Women Members

A significant increase in women's membership was noted recently at two UFMCC churches in the Southwest District.

Rev. Ken Caton, pastor of MCC Las Vegas, NV, was named one of six "citizens of the year" for 1991 by *The Bugle*, a gay and lesbian newspaper for Nevada. "We especially commend him for his work in making MCC a church which now includes women - an area which has been sorely neglected in the past," *The Bugle* said. It also said that since Rev. Caton went to Las Vegas in June 1991, the church has begun addressing AIDS issues. Soon the church will begin providing support in the areas of substance, physical and sexual abuse.

Christ Chapel MCC in Santa Ana, CA, received 38 new members in February, more than half of them women. "Women's attendance is up by 100 percent," reports Rev'd. Ron Jessor, pastor. "We are thankful for the unity and loving acceptance. From an average of 15 women to over 40 each Sunday is remarkable." □

Women's Resource Offered

A women's Passover Haggadah is once again available from SisterSpirit, an interfaith women's spirituality group that is a special ministry of the Northwest District.

As a women's Haggadah, this resource celebrates the Seder from a women's point of view. The Seder is the Jewish feast commemorating the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt, celebrated on the eve of the first day of Passover. In SisterSpirit's resource, the Hebrew and the imagery are in the feminine forms. In this Haggadah participants remember and name their foremothers both as individuals and as community. This Haggadah can be used in its entirety at women's Seders or used to supplement the more male-centered stories in mixed Seders.

To order from SisterSpirit, send \$5.50 plus \$1.00 for postage to: SisterSpirit, P.O. Box 9246, Portland, OR 97207. (Postage on large orders is negotiable by calling (503) 294-0645.) □

(Women's Survey, cont'd from pg 1)

Questions about inclusive language revealed that only 39 percent feel that their church always uses inclusive language. Inclusive language is language that reflects openness toward others in such areas as gender, race, class, age, and physical differences. It was voted into

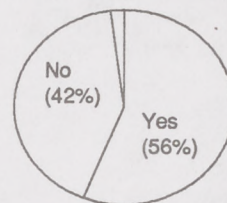
UFMCC policy at General Conference in Houston, TX, in 1981. Seventeen percent said they felt inclusive language was not used enough in their local church or UFMCC. Another 300 surveys have been collected since August 1991, and a final report is being compiled. The idea for the survey emerged



"Women Creating Global Community" was the theme of the Church Women United State Assembly in Long Beach, CA, Feb. 8 attended by an eight-woman delegation from UFMCC. This was the first official link between UFMCC and Women United, a U.S. national movement of Protestant, Roman Catholic, Orthodox and other Christian Women. It has 1,750 units in all 50 states. The UFMCC delegation included, clockwise from the top, Ms. Juanita Majel, Ms. Beverly Winters, Ms. Beatrice Bell, Ms. Chris Chew, Rev. Isabel Amorim, Rev. Kit Cherry, Ms. Colette Jackson, and Rev. LaPaula Turner.

during a discussion of goals at a meeting of Interim Steering Committee. Other members of the Interim Steering Committee are Rev. Bev Baptiste, Ms. Brenda Carty, Ms. Judy Dale, Ms. Julie Tizard, and Rev. LaPaula Turner, with Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson as liaison elder. □

"Have you ever experienced sexual or physical violence?"



Keeping in Touch is a monthly publication of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches. We are a church of the lesbian and gay community, open to all. Our mission is to call people to new life through the liberating gospel of Jesus Christ, confront injustice through Christian social action, and create a community of healing and reconciliation.

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Send address changes, news and ideas to: *Keeping in Touch*, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd, #304, Los Angeles, CA 90029; (213) 464-5100.

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Deadline for each issue: 15th of previous month.

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Gays and Lesbians Claim Right to Work and Minister

Job Discrimination Protested

MCC of Huntsville, AL, is one of many groups demonstrating to gain full employment rights for lesbians and gay men.

Early in 1991, Cracker Barrel restaurant chain issued a memo stating that it would not employ people "whose sexual preferences fail to demonstrate normal heterosexual values." It is reported the company has fired at least 17 people on the basis of sexual orientation since that memo.

One form of protest being presented in the gay and lesbian media across the United States is to buy one share of Cracker Barrel Old Country (Symbol CBRL) stock so that keeping track of all the single shares will financially damage the firm.

A variety of protests have been held, including the one described in this article, by Ms. Martha Hovater. It is reprinted from *Joyful Noise*, the newsletter of MCC Huntsville. Major organizers of the protests include Queer Nation and ACT-UP.



"We are a gentle angry people..." and we expressed our anger in good civil rights tradition at the Athens (Alabama) Cracker Barrel restaurant on Sunday, January 5th.

Approximately 35 demonstrators participated in the event, which was an action conducted by Alabama NOW (National Organization for Women) and MCC.

Most of the group began with an old-fashioned "sit-in" inside the restaurant until they were forced to leave and join the group of picketers on the highway.

For those of you who missed it - it was cold, it was muddy, and at one point it was a little scary (when one Cracker Barrel customer pointed a gun at us as he left the scene). It was also a positive and empowering experience. The police were great, and there was more support from the passers-by than one might expect. The personal is, indeed, political.

This was not a one-time event. Discrimination is not a one-time event. Each of us must set our own limits on what we are willing and not willing to do. Sometimes our decisions are honestly based on time constraints, personal values and political opinions. Sometimes, however, our decisions are based on an internalized homophobia that makes us parties to our own oppression. Decisions based on the former are understood and accepted by most people. Decisions based on the latter are also understood by most because most have been there. Maybe some day none of us will be. □

Lutheran Pastor Ousted

Rev'd. Stanton Richards, interim pastor of MCC Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, was ousted from his job as pastor of a Lutheran church in January.

The stated reason for the dismissal was that a motion for approval of his work with MCC Winnipeg was defeated 91-73 by his congregation at Sherwood Park Lutheran Church. He said the real reason is that the congregation can't accept his homosexuality and his desire to speak out on gay and lesbian issues.

"I feel like I've been born again for the first time," Rev'd. Richards was quoted as saying after the vote to remove him. The interview with him appeared in the *Vancouver Sun*. The case has received wide publicity.

Rev'd. Richards has been married 25 years, but has a non-sexual relationship with his wife, Nadine. They have until Sept. 1 to move out of their church-owned house and for Rev'd. Richards to find a new job.

"A lot of people have gone home confirmed in their prejudices and some have gone home angry," he said in the *Sun*. "An injustice was dealt to me and it's the community that must stand in judgement." □

Presbyterians Call Lesbian Pastor

Rev'd. Jane Spahr has been called as the first openly homosexual pastor of a member church in the Presbyterian Church (USA).

Since 1982, Rev'd. Spahr has been executive director of Ministry of Light, a ministry to the gay and lesbian community in the San Francisco, CA, area. For two years before that, she served as minister of pastoral care at MCC San Francisco. She is the spouse of Rev. Coni Staff, chair of the interim steering committee of the UFMCC Women's Secretariat.

Downtown United Presbyterian Church in Rochester, NY, called Rev'd. Spahr in December. Her call was approved by the 76-church Genesee Valley Presbytery, but a group of conservative churches in the presbytery has filed a complaint against it with the Synod of the Northeast, charging that the hiring violates church rules barring lesbians and gays from ministry. The struggle has gained national publicity and promises to become a test case for the Presbyterian Church. □

New Churches Sprout Across The Globe

New UFMCC churches have started up recently across the globe.

The first UFMCC meeting in Newcastle, England, was held Nov. 28. UFMCC made front-page morning news there before the meeting as a result of an interview with Mr. David Judson, who leads the Newcastle group, and Mr. Paul Scroton, coordinator of Outreach Ministries, a special work of UFMCC in the United Kingdom. Six people attended the first meeting, and fortnightly meetings are being planned.

Two new mission churches have started in the Mid-Central District: Minnesota Valley MCC in Mankato, MN, with Ms.

Elaine Thomas as pastoral leader, and MCC of Sioux City, IA, with Mr. Brian Hanlon as pastoral leader.

A weekly Bible study group has begun meeting in Fort Wayne, IN, following a successful Advent series taught there. Led by Mr. Bob Hull, it is an outreach of Good Samaritan Parish MCC in Toledo, OH.

The new UFMCC Church in Evansville, IN, holds its first worship service Feb. 23. The worship coordinator is Mim Pfender, assisted by Rev. Bob Falls. □



Photo by Mr. Bill Doggett

Students and faculty build understanding and lasting relationships every year at Samaritan College's Orientation to MCC Pastoring. Pictured during an informal discussion at Orientation are, from left, Mr. Bernard Barbour, Dr. Cari Bourette, Rev. Shelley Hamilton, and Rev. Isabel Amorim.

Samaritan Orientation Offered at Four Sites

Samaritan College is presenting the "Orientation to MCC Pastoring" program in four locations simultaneously during June, July and August this year. If all locations enroll the 12 student minimum, this will be the most extensive Orientation program offered to date, and the first in four locations at once. They are:

- ▼ June 1 - July 11 Dominican College, San Rafael, CA
- ▼ June 15 - June 27 Institute for Cultural Affairs, Chicago, IL
- ▼ June 22 - July 18 Emory University, Atlanta, GA
- ▼ August 3 - August 15 Dallas, TX (location TBA)

The six week program (including Track II) will be offered in San Rafael, CA (17 miles north of San Francisco);

The first Section (Block 1) will be offered in Chicago, Atlanta and Dallas. Section 2 (Block 2) will be offered in Atlanta.

Informational brochures are being mailed now to Samaritan students and MCC congregations. Please consult these for details about tuition, fees and registration or contact Samaritan College, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 306, Los Angeles, CA 90029; (213) 464-5100; FAX (213) 464-2123. □

Accreditation Approaches

Samaritan College has entered dialogue for a joint project with Chicago Theological Seminary (CTS). CTS plans to do a national campaign to recruit lesbians and gays to attend their seminary. The goal is a joint cooperation between CTS and Samaritan College to train UFMCC clergy and to reach out to lesbians and gays in general through Samaritan College curriculum. The seminary administration first contacted Mr. Bradley Mickelson, first year seminarian and "in-care" member of Good Shepherd Parish MCC in Chicago, IL, with this news. This joint venture widens the possibilities for Samaritan College accreditation and will shape a model for future projects with other colleges, universities and seminaries. □

In Memory

Rev. Robert Pierce

Rev. Robert Pierce died of AIDS Jan. 29 at his home in Sarasota, Florida. He was 37.

Rev. Pierce served as pastor of Church of the Trinity MCC in Sarasota for six years until resigning for health reasons in November on the church's 10th Anniversary. People who knew him described him as a caring, charismatic workaholic who rarely took off his collar and never backed down from his beliefs. His vision was to build a new church, which is scheduled for completion in June.

Rev. Elder Jeri Ann Harvey preached at the funeral, which was the first service to be held in the church's new building. About 300 people attended.

Robert is survived by his spouse, Mr. Bob Murch; his father; three brothers and a sister.

Memorial gifts may be made to the Pierce Memorial Fund, Church of the Trinity MCC, 7225 N. Lockwood Ridge Rd., Sarasota, FL 34243.

Mr. Tom Hay

Mr. Tom Hay died of a heart attack Jan. 25 while attending the seventh anniversary banquet of MCC of the Pines in Clearwater, FL.

Born in 1942, Mr. Hay was the spouse of Rev. David Holzhauer pastor of the church. Mr. Hay was also dean of a private school. The couple was about to celebrate their own seventh anniversary, and Rev. Holzhauer expressed his love for Mr. Hay in a speech to 200 people at the banquet an hour before the death.

A memorial service was held at King of Peace MCC in St. Petersburg, FL, with Rev. Fred Williams officiating.

Mr. Hay is survived by his spouse, father, stepmother and sister.

Memorial gifts may be made to the Tom Hay Memorial Student Clergy Fund, MCC of the Pines, 3350 Ulmerton Rd. #14, Clearwater, FL 34620.

Mr. Fred McVey

Mr. Fred McVey died Feb. 12 after a long battle with AIDS. He was 30.

Mr. McVey was a chef and the spouse of Rev. Lew Broyles. The couple met when Rev. Broyles was pastoring MCC Jackson, MS. Six months ago they moved to Ft. Worth, TX, where they became associated with Agape MCC.

Memorial gifts may be made to the Agape MCC Building Fund, P.O. Box 15247, Ft. Worth, TX 76119.

Mr. Larry Boyd

Mr. Larry Boyd died Feb. 16 of AIDS. He was 30.

Mr. Boyd was the spouse of Rev. David Presley. They were together when Rev. Presley pastored MCC Wichita Falls, TX. In 1991, the couple moved to Arlington, TX, where they became associated with Trinity MCC. □

Around the Fellowship

Praises

First MCC of Atlanta, GA, received an \$18,000 grant to provide full-time pastoral counseling in 1992 to those infected with and affected by HIV. This ministry augments the church's ongoing outreach of providing food for people with HIV, support groups, weekly NAMES Project quilting bees, and annual Christmas teddy bear and Easter gift basket projects.

MCC Long Beach, CA, has begun a new program of bringing care packages to the homeless. "It may not seem like much, but we need to remember that when we see Jesus in heaven he's not going to ask us if we saved the world -- that was his job. He's going to ask us, 'When I was hungry, did you feed me?'" explained **Rev. Nori Rost**, associate pastor and coordinator of the project.

Rev. Judy Dahl, pastor of **MCC Ventura, CA**, will receive a Community Service Award at the annual Lesbian Rights Awards Banquet held in March by Southern California Women for Understanding.

MCC in the Mountains, which has just moved to its first rented worship space in Lebanon, NH, has grown to 28 members. Its pastor, **Rev. Fairbairn Powers**, can be recognized on the road by her car's personalized license plates: "MCC-MTNS."

Christ Alive MCC of Vancouver, BC, Canada, celebrates its 15th anniversary Feb. 21-23.

Two churches have adopted new names: **Corpus Christi, TX**, is now home to **Christ's Temple MCC**, and the church in Columbus, OH, is now **Friendship MCC**. □

Positions Available

Church Research, a division of the **John Hose Center** in Chicago, is seeking Canadian, European, and Australian research assistants to supply data for a study on Pastoral Survival. This is a non-compensated position. For more information, write: John Hose Center, 5 N. Wabash, Suite 1407, Chicago, IL 60602. □

Top 20 Tithes - January 1992

1.	Church/Holy Spirit MCC, Ft. Lauderdale, FL	US\$	2,388.92
2.	Good Shepherd Parish MCC, Chicago, IL		1,948.43
3.	MCC Toronto, Ontario, Canada	CAN\$	1,885.18
4.	MCC of the Resurrection, Houston, TX		1,823.82
5.	MCC San Francisco, San Francisco, CA		1,481.30
6.	First MCC of Kansas, Wichita, KS		1,343.44
7.	River City MCC, Sacramento, CA		1,155.88
8.	MCC Tampa, Tampa, FL		1,154.84
9.	MCC Tucson, Tucson, AZ		1,152.29
10.	St. Luke's MCC, Jacksonville, FL		1,140.93
11.	King of Peace MCC, St. Petersburg, FL		1,105.51
12.	Agape' MCC, Ft. Worth, TX		766.05
13.	Church of the Trinity MCC, Sarasota, FL		736.63
14.	MCC New York, New York City, NY		727.84
15.	MCC of the Rockies, Denver, CO		715.43
16.	All God's Children MCC, Minneapolis, MN		714.98
17.	Church of Our Savior MCC, Boca Raton, FL		678.08
18.	MCC Key West, Key West, FL		627.50
19.	MCC Albuquerque, Albuquerque, NM		527.68
20.	MCC of Northern Virginia, Falls Church, VA		521.16

(These figures reflect the 10 percent of each local church's income that is reported to Fellowship headquarters)

Prayers

General Council will be meeting in Los Angeles, CA, March 12-17. Also meeting in conjunction with General Council are the **Clergy Credentials and Concerns Executive Committee**, the **Department of People of Color Executive Committee**, the **Board of Evangelism** and other Program heads. Prayers are requested that God may bless and direct their work.

Mr. Ken Rogers' mother died Jan. 27 after suffering a stroke. Mr. Rogers is lay representative for the European North Sea District. His father died in June 1991.

Mr. Art Neumann, the father of **Ms. Janice Neumann**, died Jan. 25 in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, after being ill with cancer. Ms. Neumann is the spouse of Rev. Bev Baptiste, Western Canadian District Coordinator.

Rev. Peter Helt, pastor of **MCC of the Lehigh Valley** in Allentown, PA, lost his secular job Jan. 17. He is also Mid-Atlantic District Treasurer.

MCC Huntsville, AL, requested prayers after the Klu Klux Klan staged a counter-demonstration during the church's demonstration for lesbian and gay rights at Cracker Barrel Restaurant in Kullman, AL. □

Transitions

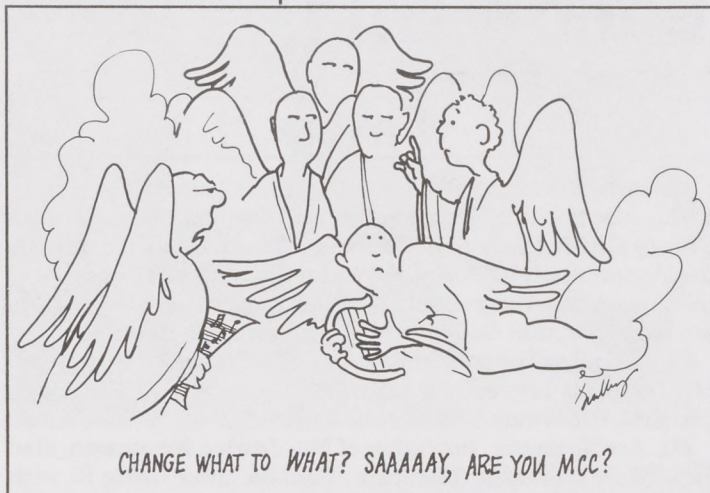
Rev'd. Bonnie Long has been appointed interim pastoral leader of **MCC Calgary**, Alberta, Canada, while the church searches for a permanent pastor. She is a transfer clergy from the Church of God of Prophecy. She comes to the church via **MCC St. Louis, MO**. The Canadian government granted recognition to Rev'd. Long's spouse, **Mel**, by extending her visitor's permit on humanitarian grounds.

Rev'd. Kathy Baker has been appointed interim pastor of **MCC Baltimore, MD**. She is credentialed in the Church of Christ Consciousness.

Rev. Carol Wier has been appointed pastor of **MCC Pioneer** in Denver, CO. □

Top 20 Per Capita - January 1992

1.	Good Shepherd Parish MCC, Chicago, IL	US\$	83.27
2.	New Life MCC, Berkeley, CA		47.43
3.	MCC Tucson, Tucson, AZ		45.19
4.	Open Arms MCC, Rochester, NY		38.69
5.	MCC Rockville, Rockville, MD		29.87
6.	MCC of Northern Virginia, Falls Church, VA		29.78
7.	MCC of the Disciples, Washington, DC		21.65
8.	Faith Eternal MCC, Springfield, IL		20.16
9.	MCC of the Hudson Valley, Albany, NY		19.53
10.	Church With a Vision MCC, Longview, TX		19.44
11.	Diablo Valley MCC, Concord, CA		19.41
12.	Open Arms Community Church, Santa Rosa, CA		17.68
13.	Dawn of Faith MCC, Pearland, TX		17.60
14.	MCC of Mt. Vernon, Seattle, WA		16.87
15.	MCC Hartford, Hartford, CT		16.63
16.	Redeemer MCC of Flint, Flint, MI		16.62
17.	MCC Hickory, Hickory, NC		16.09
18.	MCC Santa Barbara County, Santa Barbara, CA		16.05
19.	Pikes Peak MCC, Colorado Springs, CO		16.02
20.	MCC New York, New York City, NY		15.62



CHANGE WHAT TO WHAT? SAAAAAY, ARE YOU MCC?

MCC Santo Domingo Reports Ministry Efforts

Rev. Howard Williams, pastor of MCC Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, looked back on 1991 and reported that the church did the following:

- ▼ Provided more than 2,000 meals to people.
- ▼ Secured employment for five people.
- ▼ Enabled two children to attend school full-time, with books.
- ▼ Started a Sunday school, which 15 children attend.
- ▼ Gave out \$314 in personal aid for such things as shoes, and rent. This included \$100 to keep one young man out of jail.
- ▼ Instructed people on safer sex and helped set up an AIDS support group.
- ▼ Provided water purifiers and lessons on how to use them.

In addition, the church provided regular worship services, Bible study, and leadership training. □

Cruise The Mexican Riviera

Christ Chapel MCC in Santa Ana, CA, is sponsoring a seven-day RSVP cruise to the Mexican Riviera March 21-28.

Thirty people from Christ Chapel MCC plan to go and space is still available. Prices start at approximately \$1,000.

For more information, contact Mr. Mitch Samuels, c/o Christ Chapel MCC, 720 N. Spurgeon St., Santa Ana, CA 92701; (714) 835-0722. □

UFMCC Youth Network Forms

A network of youth in UFMCC is being formed by Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson. Anyone under age 27 who is interested in this network is invited to contact Rev. Wilson at: c/o UFMCC, 5300 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 304, Los Angeles, CA 90029. □

Newsletter Empowers Transsexuals

FTM newsletter is now available for female-to-male transsexuals and cross-dressers and women exploring gender issues. It is also useful for helping professionals.

For more information, write to *FTM* at 5227 College Ave., #142, Oakland, CA 94618. □

More Holy Unions?

Twice as many holy unions are apparently being performed this year by UFMCC clergy.

Rev. Bob Arthur, UFMCC Church Services Coordinator, reports that the number of Holy Union certificates sold from November 1991 to February 1992 is at least double the number sold in the same period a year earlier.

Possible reasons for the increase include recent national publicity about blessing same-sex relationships and the AIDS epidemic, which is leading more people to want to make permanent commitments. □

(UFMCC Raises Profile...cont'd from pg 1)

Outreach Ministries has been working in Scotland since 1990, seeking to establish MCC congregations there. Rev. Frank Scott worked with Mr. Alex McLeodmair and Mr. Gary McNeil preparing the foundations for future development in Glasgow.

Following a few months of limited activity, Outreach Ministries has been able to commence work again and re-establish regular meetings in Glasgow. Mr. Scroton is currently spending one week each month working with local contacts.

Mr. Scroton has taken the role of Interim Pastoral Leader in Glasgow until local leadership can be identified. This responsibility is in addition to pastoring the MCC group in Manchester. This work is not salaried, and is funded solely by voluntary gifts. All financial support is appreciated, and gifts may be sent via the Outreach Ministries Treasurer, Mr. Ken Rogers, P.O. Box 59, Wolverhampton, WV10 8QX, England. □

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